low River encloses in its northern bend the Ordos, a plateau which is mostly desert. The river itself is navigable as far as Lanchow in Kansu, but above its junction with the Wei many rapids interrupt its course.

To the southeast the North China plain shades off imperceptibly into the delta of the Yangtze River. However, a series of mountains and hills, with gradually diminishing heights, reaches eastward from the great ranges and table-lands of the West and forms an effective watershed between nearly all the lower length of the Yangtze—to the south—and the Huai and Yellow Rivers—to the north. The Huai River, draining much of the territory between the lower courses of its mightier neighbors, the Huang Ho and the Yangtze, constitutes one of China's major engineering problems, for it has no adequate mouth and any unusually rainy season sends its waters over the neighboring thickly settled countryside.

CHINA PROPER: THE UPPER PART OF THE YANGTZE VALLEY

(The Yangtze is one of the greatest of the world's waterways^ Rising in Tibet, the streams that go to make it cut tl^eir way ih enormous canyons off the roof of the world to form, still in rugged country, what in its upper reaches is poetically called the River of the Golden Sand. To the south of this upper course, and partly drained by it, lies the southwesternmost province of China, Yunnan—literally, "South of the Clouds." the table-land which forms the most populous portion of Yunnan is high enough to have a salubrious climate and is well watered by streams and lakes. Its natural outlet is to the southeast and this was facilitated in the twentieth century by a railway built by the French. From

Yunnan, also, a pass by way of Bhamo leads into the valley of the Irrawaddy and so into Burma—a route traversed through the centuries by merchants and armies. To Yunnan led, in the second world war of the twentieth century, the "Burma Road" and the "Ledo Road" which gave "free" China land access to the outside world.

Next on the course of the Yangtze is the great province of Szechwan (the "Four Streams"), the largest of the eighteen, and an empire in itself. The heart of Szechwan is a hilly, arable region known as the Red Basin—from the underlying sandstone.